
Housing Committee

ESB 5049

Brief Description: Requiring the disclosure of information about mold in residential dwelling units.

Sponsors: Senators Kohl-Welles, Benton, Fairley, Esser, Thibaudeau, Prentice, McAuliffe, Kline and Rockefeller.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Landlords are required to provide tenants with written information about health risks associated with mold as well as strategies to control mold growth.

Hearing Date:

Staff: Robyn Dupuis (786-7166).

Background:

Indoor mold may cause health problems to residents of a dwelling, particularly in the case of residents who have allergies or asthma. Such individuals may experience skin rash, running nose, eye irritation, cough, congestion, and aggravation of asthma. An individual with an immune suppression or underlying lung disease may be at increased risk for infections from molds.

Excess moisture or water in a dwelling from, for example, a leaky roof, high humidity, or flooding, create ideal conditions for mold growth. Molds can grow on wood, ceiling tiles, wallpaper, paints, carpet, sheet rock, and insulation. When molds are disturbed, their spores may be released into the air. Individuals then can be exposed to the spores by breathing the air. Individuals can also be exposed to mold and mold spores through skin contact.

There is no way to rid all mold and mold spores from a dwelling, however mold growth should be controlled by stopping water leaks, increasing air circulation in the dwelling, installing exhaust fans, ventilating attic and crawl spaces, promptly cleaning and drying carpets and other cloth surface, and vacuuming and cleaning the dwelling regularly.

The Department of Health provides information about mold health risks, mold control, and mold abatement on its website.

There are no federal regulations governing indoor air quality standards for mold.

Summary of Bill:

Landlords of residential property are required to provide tenants with information about the health hazards associated with indoor mold, as well as strategies to control mold growth. This information must be provided by, or approved by, the Department of Health (DOH). When developing or changing the mold information to be provided to landlords, the DOH must include landlord representatives in the development process. Landlords may obtain mold-related information to satisfy this requirement from the DOH website, or may request that the DOH mail printed information directly to the landlord.

Landlords must provide mold information to new tenants at the time the lease or rental agreement is signed and to current tenants no later than January 1, 2006.

Landlords, agents, and their employees are immune from civil liability if they fail to provide the required information on mold, unless they do so knowingly and intentionally.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: A fiscal note was requested on February 11, 2005.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.